



*Meriwether  
Lewis*

**US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
and the  
LEWIS AND CLARK  
BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION**



*William Clark*

**“CURRENTS OF CHANGE”  
St. Louis, MO Signature Event  
September 22-24, 2006  
After Action Report**

**BACKGROUND:** In 2000, the National Council for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial decided to highlight some of the more nationally significant festivals and events and call them “Signature Events”. These events were to be those of nationwide historical significance, have the potential of high visitation, and be multicultural in nature. The “Currents of Change” was designated as the last of these Signature Events. The weather for the event was rainy, cool, and breezy with temps in the upper 50’s to low 60’s.

The event was located along the St. Louis, MO waterfront at the base of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (the Arch) between the Eads Bridge and the Poplar Street Bridge. In addition, there were several ancillary sites in both Illinois and Missouri. These will be discussed in depth later.

In addition to Ken Wilk and myself, Corps personnel that worked in one or more of the venues at this Signature Event included: Charlie Deutsch, Tim Bischoff (both MVS); Renea Guin, Brian Westfall, Jeffrey Lockwood (all MVK); Ed Shirley, Robby Henderson (both SWF); Craig Rockwell (NWW); Rick Magee, Scott Tichy (both MVP); Heather Burke (SAJ); Sara Jernigan (SAM); Gene Herrmann, Pat Kline, Larry Spisak (all LRP); Jon Carlson, Patti Williams, Kelly Thomas (all NWP); Hilary Bragg (MVR); Alana Mesenbrink (NWS); Dave White (NWK); Matt Like (SWT); and Allen Gwinn (NAB). Also assisting were Susie Kline, Rich Deline, and John Luzader. Supplementing Captain Lewis’ Company were Eric Matthews, Steve Wilson, Jeff Bender, John Steinle, Jim Hebb, Jim McElhinney – all members of the Frontier Army Living History Association (FALHA).

Also present at the VIP reception on Friday September 22, and the Lewis and Clark Statue Dedication and the Closing Ceremonies on Saturday, were LTG Carl Strock (Chief of Engineers), BG Gregg Martin (NWD Commander), Col. William Ryan (LRD Deputy Commander), Col. Lewis Setliff (MVS Commander), LTC Joel Cross (NWO Deputy Commander), and LTC Phillip Kaufmann (NWP Deputy Commander). LTG Strock was a speaker at both the VIP Reception (presenting a Peace Medal and blanket to Alan Pinkham, Chairman of the Circle of Tribal Advisors) as well as the Lewis and Clark statue dedication.

**ACTION:** The Corps was involved in many separate venues during this commemorative event. Each location and venue is described below.

## ST. LOUIS WATERFRONT

A variety of exhibits was spread along the length of the waterfront between the Eads and Poplar Street Bridges. Federal agencies were grouped together at the north end of the exhibit area near the Eads Bridge. Tribal entities occupied the south end of the exhibit area. The sole exception to this was that Corps II was located on the extreme south end of the area (near the Poplar Street Bridge) with a huge open space between the tribal exhibits and Corps II. It was unfortunate that there was such an open distance between the exhibits as many visitors did not venture all of the way down the waterfront to see Corps II. As a result, visitation numbers for Corps II were not as high as they could have been.

Also on the waterfront were three speaker stages. The Education and Environment Stage was located in the middle of the Federal agency exhibits. The Tribal Stage was located within the Tribal area. The middle of the waterfront at the base of the Arch was home to the main stage which was the site of the Closing Ceremonies on Saturday afternoon.

COE Exhibit: The Corps exhibit had four parts – (1) one backdrop of the historic aspect of Lewis and Clark and one backdrop of the modern army connection; (2) a display of the Discovery Box; (3) an information table that contained a variety of COE brochures; and (4) a “trading center” where the give-away items were placed into a brass cooking pot suspended from a wooden tripod. This was an attempt to engage more people, especially kids, in the booth to peak their interest in the expedition. In order to get something from the trading center, visitors first had to answer a question related to the expedition. During the 3-day Signature Event, roughly 5,082 interpretive contacts were made at the exhibit.

### Corps of Discovery 2 – 200 Years to the Future (aka: Corps 2)

The Corps 2 exhibit itself consists of approximately 32 panels with an associated audiotape headset that discuss Jefferson’s vision; Lewis, Clark, and the members of the expedition; with the remainder depicting the natural resources and the Native American influences on the expedition. In addition, Raystown Lake Project (NAB) constructed and donated a ½-size land-based replica of a keelboat. Visitors were encouraged to come into the keelboat for interpretive programs about the expedition. During the Signature Event, all COE park rangers worked at the keelboat exhibit. They provided interpretive talks and information to both dignitaries and members of the public. This resulted in approximately 746 interpretive contacts.

### Tent Of Many Voices (TOMV)

Associated with Corps II, TOMV has a small stage for presentations and seating capacity of 150. The Corps representative who spoke during this Signature Event was Ed Shirley (SWF) on Provisioning the Expedition. In all, Mr. Shirley had 82 interpretive contacts.

Education and Environment Stage: During the Signature Event, an area within Federal exhibit tent and artifact tent was set aside for a variety of Federal, State and local

speakers. The Corps had several representatives that participated in this venue. Speakers included Larry Spisak (LRP) and Rick Magee (MVP) (“Music and Dance of the Time”); Tim Bischoff (MVS) (“George Drouillard”); Craig Rockwell (NWW) (“William Clark”); and Alana Mesenbrink (NWS) (“Blood, Sweat, and Fears of the Expedition”). These presentations resulted in a total of 132 interpretive contacts.

## ELSEWHERE IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION

There were many ancillary sites in the St. Louis area (both in Missouri and Illinois) that provided venues during this last of the Signature Events. However, the Corps of Engineers were involved in just a few of them described below.

Fort Bellefontaine: Located on the Missouri River in northern St. Louis, Fort Bellefontaine was an Army garrison in the early 1800’s. This frontier military post was the predecessor of both Jefferson Barracks and the St. Louis Arsenal. It was established in 1805 at the mouth of Coldwater Creek, then called La Petite Riviere. The fort was used by the Army through 1828 when its decaying condition and the changing military needs of the region, convinced the War Department to abandon the location.

Members of the Lewis and Clark expedition camped here at the beginning of their voyage on May 14, 1804 as well as their final night of their expedition here on Sept. 22, 1806. On the last occasion the time was spent resting and celebrating their return to civilization with the fellow American soldiers stationed at this outpost.

For this venue, the members of the Corps Captain Lewis Company were asked to portray those soldiers that were stationed at Fort Bellefontaine in 1806. The Discovery Expedition of St. Charles (a local reenactment group that had reenacted the expedition from Pittsburgh, PA to the Pacific Ocean and back to St. Louis) portrayed the Expedition members.

Participating in this venue were Larry Spisak and Pat Kline (both LRP); Robby Henderson (SWF); Jon Carlson (NWP); Jim Hebb, John Steinle, Jeff Bender, Jim McElhinney, Eric Matthews (all members of FAHLA). In addition, members of the Illinois Detachment (Dennis Nichols, Don Ferricks, Todd Western, Dick Kroener, Tedd Mueller, and Ron Stellhorn) were also in attendance. Under the watchful eyes of many visitors, the men did several drills earlier in the day to prepare for the arrival salute. At the time of the reenactment of the arrival of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 3 shots were fired in succession from each of the three guns. Two guns were replica British Infantry Light 3-pounder on a butterfly carriage, with bronze barrel. The third gun was a half-size 6-pounder. The men also participated in a grand parade through camp along with the St. Charles group, some of the local garrison officers and the St. Charles fife and drum team. This venue was operated only on Friday, September 22 but was well attended. In all roughly 2,000 interpretive contacts were made.

School programs at National Great Rivers Museum (NGRM): On Friday September 22, demonstration areas were set up at the NGRM (located at Mel Price L&D, Alton, IL) for 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes of local schools that had arranged tours to the Signature Event on that day. These programs were roughly 25 minutes long and were intended to teach students

more about the expedition. Assisting in this effort were Rick Magee (MVP) “Lewis and Clark as Naturalists”; Dave White (NWK) “Transportation and Mapping”; Jeffrey Lockwood (MVK) “Animals of the Expedition”; Gene Herrmann (LRP) and Steve Wilson (FAHLA) “Drilling”; and John Luzader “Sgt. Patrick Gass”. In all, roughly 1200 interpretive contacts were made.

Reenactment at Camp River DuBois – On the grounds of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Hartford, IL is a replica of the fort constructed by the expedition during the winter of 1803-04. During the time of the Signature Event, members of the Corps’ Captain Lewis’ Company as well as members of FALHA assisted the Illinois Detachment in providing costumed interpretation (1803 Army) at the reconstructed fort. Participating in this endeavor were Ed Shirley, Robbie Henderson (all SWF); Pat Kline, Larry Spisak, Gene Herrmann (all LRP); Jon Carlson (NWP); Tim Bischoff, Charlie Deutsch (both MVS); Rick Magee (MVP); and Eric Matthews, Jeffrey Bender, Steve Wilson, Jim McElhinney, Jim Hebb, and John Steinle (all members of FALHA).

The same replica British Infantry Light 3-pounder on a butterfly carriage, with bronze barrel that was used at Fort Bellefontaine was also brought to Camp River DuBois. This cannon was part of the demonstration and then also used for evening parade and the lowering of the colors. On Sunday, September 24, LTG Strock fired the final round signifying the end of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

The reenactors manned stations within the fort. The various stations gave the general public more of an accurate idea what the fort might have been like during the original expedition. Furthermore, the men took it upon themselves to present informal programs on topics such as the Army uniforms, music, and plants found during the expedition. In all, roughly 2,000 interpretive contacts were made at the fort.

History Booth - Because of the popularity of displaying artifacts at other events, the Corps team developed an artifact exhibit in which there were a variety of items (primarily medical supplies, topographical instruments, and writing implements) from the 1800-1810 time frame as well as animal pelts that would have been seen and collected by the expedition. The exhibit was located within the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Hartford, IL and was manned by Craig Rockwell dressed as Capt. Clark and assisted by uniformed Park Rangers. Roughly 919 interpretive contacts were made at the History Booth.

NGRM Michael Haynes Art Show – Arrangements had been made with Michael Haynes, an artist from the St. Louis area, to show his Lewis and Clark artwork Friday through Sunday. The Corps had commissioned five paintings from him for the Bicentennial – “Recruitment at Fort Massac” “Celebration at Independence Creek” “In Pursuit of the Sioux” “Astride the Mighty Missouri” and “Trade at Dismal Niche”. In addition to prints of those 5 paintings, there were an additional 25 paintings depicting a variety of scenes described in the journals or images of the members of the expedition. In all, roughly 270 interpretive contacts were made.

## **LESSONS LEARNED :**

1. Having the history booth location inside the museum was an asset. Having the booth stationed near the entrance allowed contact to be made with nearly everyone who entered. When questions from the visitors were asked and answers were unknown, the museum was there to fall back on.
2. The trading bucket was a great way to get kids, also adults, involved in L&C. It was amazing how much people will participate when they get free stuff.
3. The L&C pins that we handed out were great! It was something both adults and kids ate up. It was a handout they didn't have to read and something they could use to remember the event.
4. Capt. Lewis' Company should have been more a part of the main events as the St. Louis waterfront. The event organizers did not want to highlight anyone other than the local Discovery Expedition of St. Charles. There were many more reenactors that could have been recognized at the final event. Interpretive numbers would have been greater than they were at Camp DuBois.
5. The waterfront venue could have been better arranged – perhaps by having the Native American section at one end or the other of the waterfront location, with the remainder of the venue more compactly distributed. The “dead space” between the Native American exhibits and the Keelboat / Tent of Many Voices was “lethal” to the isolated units as many visitors did not venture down to the far end of the waterfront.
6. There could have been better publicizing of the multiple activities taking place at the differing and widely scattered locations during the weekend. People attending the waterfront venue were unaware of things taking place at Ft. Bellefontaine or at Hartford,

## **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial was a wonderful opportunity for the Corps to get their message out about not only the Expedition but also the workings of the Corps. As we have explained many times to senior leaders within the Corps, the story of Lewis and Clark was only the “hook” to get the public to talk to Corps representatives about the workings of the Corps and the Army.

These events were a very positive face for the Corps of Engineers. There were certainly those that visited the events who had their complaints about the Corps in general, however, it was an overwhelmingly positive response to the Corps and a tremendous educational process for thousands.

As a last note, it has been a pleasure for all of us to represent the Corps at these many events.

Jeannine M. Nauss  
National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Coordinator